

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AF-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	AEX-00	CIAE-00
	CPR-00	INL-00	DOT-00	WHA-00	PDI-00	DS-00	EAP-00
	DHSE-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VCI-00	H-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	MOFM-00	MOF-00	CDC-00	VCIE-00
	NRC-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	OES-00	NIMA-00	GIWI-00	P-00
	ISNE-00	DOHS-00	IRM-00	NCTC-00	FMP-00	BBG-00	R-00
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 FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2724
 INFO AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
 IRAN COLLECTIVE
 NATO EU COLLECTIVE
 AMEMBASSY BEIJING
 AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
 AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
 AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
 AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
 AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
 AMEMBASSY SKOPJE
 AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
 WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
 SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS THE HAGUE 000228

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 INFO EUR/WE TIM SMITH, JON BERGER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OVIP](#) [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [IR](#) [KPAO](#) [NL](#)

SUBJECT: Media Reporting: Secretary Clinton's at the Afghanistan Conference, March 30-31, 2009.

¶1. The visit of Secretary Clinton to the Netherlands to attend the Afghanistan Conference was headline news days before her arrival. Questions about whether the Dutch offered to host the conference or whether the U.S. asked them to had died down before the conference actually began. All media carried extensive coverage of the Conference and of Secretary Clinton's participation in particular. The Secretary answered two Dutch questions at her press events at the Conference and did a one-on-one Television interview with RTL News. Both were universally well received.

¶2. Print Media: All dailies led 3/31 and 4/1 with the Afghanistan Conference and the visit of Secretary Clinton. Reports were accompanied by numerous photos. The overall tone of coverage was very positive and noted the Secretary's praise for the Dutch effort to organize such a large conference in such a short period of time. All papers reported that when asked whether the U.S. would request that the Netherlands extend its mission in Afghanistan, the Secretary responded that this was a matter for the Dutch government and the Dutch people, but that she emphasized her deep appreciation for the Dutch contribution and sacrifices in Afghanistan. Reports also noted that the Secretary said the Netherlands has always been an important ally of the U.S., referring to 400 years of friendship and collaboration between the two countries.

¶3. The Secretary announcing U.S. contact with a member of the Iranian delegation was reported and caused a great deal of chatter but did not make banner headlines.

¶4. Sample headlines read: "Clinton and Holbrooke Hopeful About Future Cooperation - Even Iran Thinks With the U.S." - Influential liberal De Volkskrant (4/1 fp)
 "Afghans Get Support from 72 Countries in The Hague"
 - Influential liberal De Volkskrant (4/1 f p)
 "Less Battle, More Construction"
 - Left-of-Center Trouw (4/1 fp)
 "World Signs 'New Contract' With Afghanistan"
 - Influential liberal NRC Handelsblad (3/31-fp)
 "International Praise For Successful Conference"

- Conservative mass-circulation De Telegraaf (4/1-fp)

15. Electronic Media: All television news programs covered the Secretary's visit from her arrival through her press availabilities at the Afghanistan Conference. The Secretary's one-on-one television interview with RTL was well received, with even competitors acknowledging that it was an extremely good interview. RTL carried clips in its 3/31 main news show and aired the entire interview as a special. The broadcaster's daytime news program RTLZ repeated the entire interview on 4/1 in the morning and the afternoon. With clips also shown on several talk shows, the interview reached approximately 4 million viewers.

16. Commentary: "More Than Words Only under The Hague Big Tent" Influential liberal De Volkskrant editorializes (4/1): "Huge conferences offer an excellent stage for announcing noble intentions and speaking lofty words. That was also true at the Afghanistan Qand speaking lofty words. That was also true at the Afghanistan Conference in The Hague, where representatives from almost eighty countries and international organizations promised renewed efforts to rid the country of evil. It is not difficult to look at the reality in Afghanistan and see that there is a huge gap between dream and deed... even though the U.S. is sending 21,000 additional troops to Afghanistan, the size of the NATO troops remains insufficient... Yet it would be wrong to just simply talk about the many problems... for the so-called Big Tent, organized at an admirable pace, was exactly what its name implicates: it was unprecedentedly huge. Despite the discord that accumulated during the Bush administration, almost all the invited countries were prepared to give this initiative of the new U.S. government a chance... the situation in Afghanistan will not immediately improve. There are still major concerns. The unity displayed at the conference is fragile, but if the core of the Taliban thought the international community had given up on Afghanistan and that it could easily seize power, then now they know better."

Conservative mass-circulation De Telegraaf states in its editorial (3/31): "The Afghanistan Conference today in The Hague confirms that the Netherlands and particularly The Hague, is the center of international justice.... However, that doesn't mean that the Dutch hospitality implies that the Netherlands would expand its efforts in Afghanistan... extending the Dutch military mission in its current format is a non-starter for the Netherlands has more than met its international commitments. The United States and other friendly nations would certainly understand. The new strategy President Obama presented does raise hope. For despite successes that have been booked, it is very clear that the criminal Taliban should be defeated..."

"Less Battle, More Construction" Left-of-Center Trouw analyzes (4/1): "At the beginning of the conference, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton said it officially: the war on terror no longer exists... the Obama Administration is clearly dropping the policy of his predecessor.... This is more than a semantic issue.... They all sat at the table in the Big Tent and the Obama Administration received the desired applause. But the Afghanistan policy can only work if the neighboring countries cooperate in curbing down extremists. The War on Terror might no longer exist but the fight is far from over...."

"Sum with Variables" Influential liberal NRC Handelsblad states in its editorial (4/1): "The issue in the Big Tent in The Hague was a regional strategy to save Afghanistan from further disintegration. One of the most important instruments is a different attitude toward the Taliban. America, too, no longer sees the Taliban as one movement. In addition to al-Qaida supporters, the Taliban also includes rebels who take to violence out of desperation. According to Secretary Clinton dialogue with them is no longer a taboo... Eventually, the Afghanistan Conference was actually a Pakistan Conference. This crumbling nuclear power has been defined as the key state in the region. Secretary Clinton said, 'Afghanistan and Pakistan: one common enemy, one common threat, one common task.' Regionalization, however, means spreading responsibilities. That might be the intention of the U.S. and NATO but this dilution also means that other countries will also demand their own spot... that is not only true for India but Iran has also acquired a new position which the U.S. in particular, will have to take into

account... China's Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Russia, and the former Central Asian Soviet republics are all emerging. That would make this Euro-Asian counterpart of NATO more important that the alliance probably would like it to be... Pacification of the region does become an equation with increasingly more variables... that also means that the sum in The Hague has become more complex..."

Gallagher